

Baggy Baby-sits Little Nipper

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Baggy Gator sat in his easy chair and decided to open the mail. The first letter he came to was from his sister, Snipper.

Hmmmm, thought Baggy, I wonder what Sis is up to. I hope it's not to visit. The last time she came, she brought my nephew Little Nipper. And what a little terror he was!

The letter read:

"Dear brother Baggy:

Biff and I are going to go on a second honeymoon to Niagara Swamp. We just knew you'd love having Little Nipper to stay with you while we are gone. So, by the time you read this letter, he should be arriving.

Thanks.

Love. . . Snipper"

Baggy closed his eyes and groaned. When he opened them again, he saw a small figure standing in front of him.

"Hey there, unca Baggy," said the tiny tot.

It was Little Nipper.



“Look what I got!” Nipper took his water pistol and let Baggy have it, right between the eyes. Squish squish.



“Hey, hold on there,” said Baggy. “I already took my shower this morning in the hotel fountain.” He grabbed the pistol away from Nipper.

“Are you mad, unca Baggy?” asked Nipper.

“Mad?” said Baggy, wiping his face. “Why, whatever gave you that idea? Do you know what I say?”

“What do you say, unca Baggy?”

“Every day and in every way, I’m getting wetter and wetter!”

“I thought it was ‘better and better,’ unca Baggy.”

“Not with you around, Nippy boy. So, uh, you’ve come to stay, have you?” said Baggy.

“Sure, unca Baggy. Mamma said you’d take real good care of me, huh?” said Nipper.

Baggy put his arm around Nipper’s shoulders and led him to the kitchen.

“Follow me, my nifty nephew,” said Baggy. “Have some cookies and milk while I make a phone call.”

Baggy raced for the phone. If he had to look after Nipper, then he was going to need reinforcements. The obvious choice was his buddy and friend, Lillia DiValli.

“Hello,” answered Lillia, picking up the phone. “The clouds are out, the sky is clear, the sun is shining, and I am here,” she chimed.



“Lillia!” cried Baggy, gasping in panic. “I need your help! Nipper is here for me to look after, and somebody has to look after me while I do it. Woo wooooo.”

“I’ll be right over. Don’t move.” Lillia hung up the phone.

Baggy had no sooner hung up his phone than there was a knock at his front door. Now, who could that be? He opened the door and saw Lillia standing there wearing her usual 60’s style clothing — a pair of polka-dot pants and flashy bright-pink top.

“You are a case, Baggy,” said Lillia, rushing past him into the house. “You’re lucky. I’m free to help now that I finished my wrestling course at the college. I was the only girl in class, but I

made the guys all yell ‘uncle.’ The instructor named me Champ of the Class and gave me an ‘A’.”

Nipper was finishing his last cookie and looked up.

“Hi, aunt Lillia. Wotcha doing?”

“I’m here to help your uncle Baggy look after you,” she chirped. “By the way, Baggy, just what are we going to do and where are we going to do it?”

“Going?” croaked Baggy. “You mean we have to go somewhere? I just thought I’d read him a few of my favorite stories. Like *‘The Rock and Why It Sits There Doing Nothing.’* Very calm story. Nothing happens from beginning to end. I use it to read myself to sleep.”

“Baggy,” groaned Lillia, “kids today are much more hip, hep and with it than that. You won’t get away with pulling that on him. He wants to do things. I want to do things.” Lillia grabbed Baggy firmly by the arm. “Or would you like to learn how to say ‘uncle’?”



“Hey, I’m hip (oooh), I’m hep (ow), I’m with it!” yelped Baggy with a painful grin, and snatching his arm away. “I have an idea. Why don’t we go do things?”

“Gee, that’s a great idea, unca Baggy. I’m glad you thought of it,” said Nipper.

He and Lillia smirked at each other.

“By the way, José” said Baggy, as they were walking down the street. “What day is this? I’ve lost track. I don’t even know the day or the date.”

“It’s Wednesday, unca Baggy,” replied Nipper who had stopped and was refilling his water pistol at a water fountain.

“You know,” added Lillia, “I’ve always wished that for each day the sky would be a certain color. That way you could look up at the sky and know what day it is just by the color.”

“What colors, aunt Lillia?” asked Nipper, looking at the sky.

“Oh, I like pink, chartreuse...” began Lillia.

“And polka-dots,” said Baggy, eyeing her pants.

“And what color would you prefer, sir?” replied Lillia, coldly.

“What any self-respecting gator would prefer... GREEN!” Baggy exclaimed.

Baggy, Lillia and Nipper all stood at the corner curb. Cars were whizzing by and a policeman was nearby directing traffic. Nipper, who was shooting his water pistol at anything and everything, was aiming at Baggy, but unca Baggy saw him out of the corner of his eye and ducked.

The squirt went all over the policeman. Baggy gasped in horror.

“Eeeek! Give me that pistol.” He took it away from Nipper and was busy squirting the remaining water out, when the dripping-wet policeman walked up.

“Baggy Gator! I might have known it’d be you. Are you out robbing banks or watering the plants?” asked officer Dodgum, wiping his wet face with his handkerchief.



Baggy jumped about two feet off the ground.

“Officer Dodgum! Really, you don’t understand. It wasn’t me, it was...”

He looked down at Nipper. No, he couldn’t turn Nipper in. Not unca Baggy. He looked at Lillia. A mischievous thought went through his mind. No, he thought, shaking his head, he couldn’t blame it on her as well. This could be a way of getting a little bit of his own back from the messes she got him into, but... no, he couldn’t do it.

“Uh, officer, you’ll just have to run me in. I cannot tell a lie.”

He paused to get his breath. Lillia came to his rescue.

“He cannot tell a lie, officer. The gun has a bad leak and sometimes you wet things you weren’t even pointing at, such as you, to use an example.”

Baggy looked over at Lillia in amazement. 99% of the time she got him in trouble. But, these rare 1% moments of help made it all go away, so he wiped the slate clean.

“That’s right, officer, I was aiming at Lillia, but the spray got you instead. Sorry, it’ll never happen again.”

Baggy, Lillia and Nipper all began a brisk walk away from the officer, which quickened into a full gallop as they raced away from the scene.

On down the sidewalk they stopped to get their breath.

“Why are we stopping here, unca Baggy?” asked Nipper, panting and pointing to a sign out in front of a building.

“I don’t know, young nephew (pant, pant),” gasped Baggy. “Woo woo. Let’s ask our guide.” He turned to Lillia and cleared his throat. “ And why, may I ask, are we stopping here, my dear? I was just getting used to making tracks.”

Lillia was already walking up the steps of the building. “Because this is where we’re going. Let’s go inside. Come on! It’ll be fun.”

“But the sign says ‘Museum.’ You mean we’re gonna go inside a museum and soak up some culture?”



“As much as we can hold. Hmmmm, you look a quart low, Baggy,” said Lillia, snickering.

Baggy turned to Nipper. “Now look, Nippy boy, this wasn’t my idea. I was thinking more of going to the bakery and watching them make donuts. I like to juggle the holes.”

“Come on,” said Lillia and Nipper as they ran up the stairs.

They cautiously entered the museum and gazed around them, staring up with wonder at the high, high ceilings that towered above them.

Within seconds, three museum guards ran over and surrounded Little Nipper.

“Hey,” shouted Baggy, nervously, “like what’s the plan, man?”

“Is this young fellow with you?” asked the tall guard.

“When it suits his purpose, he is,” replied Baggy, patting Nipper on the head.

“He can’t take that water pistol into the museum,” said the short, pudgy guard. “It might go off and ruin a watercolor painting or something. We’ll have to confiscate it.”

“Better give it to them, Nipper,” said Lillia.



The guards took the squirt gun and ran off, laughing and squirting each other and the marble statues as they went.

“Hey, aunt Lillia, look at this. You too, unca Baggy,” shouted Nipper, pointing at a large poster on the wall.

Clothes of the 1960’s Exhibit

read the poster and an arrow pointed to two doors hidden behind large canvas sheets. On the floor surrounding the doors were cans of paint, more sheets of canvas to catch the drops and a big, hand-lettered sign that read...

KEEP OUT!

“Well,” said Baggy with some relief, “I guess that does it for soaking up of culture. Let’s go to the bakery.”

“Now Baggy,” said Lillia with exasperation, “that doesn’t mean we can’t see some of the other exhibits.”

Little Nipper had already opened the doors to the Keep Out room and was peering inside. Lillia pranced over, grabbed his hand and was saying, “Nipper, come on, we’re going to go see the ‘Artwork of Bubble-gum Wrappers’ exhibit. It’s very. . uh . . . very. . .” And there she stopped.

Lillia wasn’t without words. She was dumbfounded. And what was dumbfounding her was the sight of the statues that came into view as she grabbed Nipper’s arm.

There inside the exhibit room was an amazing sight. It was filled with statues on pedestals, all wearing the brightest, most

colorful designs from the 60's. The clothes were covered in every design imaginable: polka-dots, curly-ques, fantastic swirls making geometric shapes and paisley prints. There were Carnaby Street fashions, bell bottom pants and much, much more.

Lillia's mouth slowly drooped opened and remained that way like a cavern. She let go of Nipper's arm as she stared.

Little Nipper was way ahead of her, running into the exhibit room with Lillia close behind.

"Golly, aunt Lillia, they're all dressed like you," he said. Then a voice from outside the room caught their attention.

"Lillia! Little Nipper!"

It was Baggy's voice. He peered through the door and saw them. "Oh, there you are. Hey, this room is off-limits. Can't you read the sign?"

Then Baggy saw the statues.

"Hey, Lillia, how did we get from the museum into your clothes closet? Is there a secret passageway?"

"Baggy, this is a 60's clothing exhibit," replied Lillia. "They're still putting it together, so that's why it says 'Keep Out.' Isn't it just too cool? I love it."

Then they all stopped. Footsteps were coming toward them from the hallway. It was a guard.

"Shhh, somebody's coming. Do something, unca Baggy," whispered Little Nipper.

"Ask Lillia," retorted Baggy. "She brought us here."

"Get up on a one of these pedestals," said Lillia, who had mounted an empty one, "and freeze like a statue."

Baggy and Nipper climbed their own pedestals and posed with Lillia. It looked like a custom-made setting. Lillia's bright clothing made it look like they were all part of the exhibit.



The guard came into the room. He took out his flashlight and snooped around, then walked over to the Lillia group and stared at them. Baggy could see the guard out of the corner of his eye.

"Hmmm," said the guard out loud. "I've seen some motley looking statues, but that green one in the red overalls looks ready for the funny farm."

Lillia and Nipper almost broke their silence with laughter.

Nothing, though, seemed out of place. A fellow guard stuck his head in the doorway.

"Hey Bob, any problems?" he inquired.

"None that I can see. I thought I heard a noise, but I guess it was mice. Let's go get that water pistol and shoot some more museum visitors when they're not looking," he replied.

Baggy held his breath and felt a sneeze coming on.

The guards exited the room and closed the door. Baggy, Lillia and Little Nipper breathed a gasp of relief.

“Motley am I?” sniffed Baggy. “I resent thaaat...aaachooooo!”



“Let’s be heading home,” said Lillia, looking out the door of the exhibit room for guards. “Okay, all clear.”

Baggy, Lillia and Little Nipper quickly made their way out of the museum and down the sidewalk toward Baggy’s house.

When they got back to Baggy’s home, they saw a familiar vehicle out front. It belonged to Baggy’s sister, Snipper, and her husband, Biff.

Hooray! thought Baggy silently. Sis is here to pick up Nipper. Then he spoke.

“Oh darn, Nipper my little reptile relation. Your mom and dad are back from their second honeymoon and are here to pick you up. Darn, I repeat.”

Nipper was very disappointed. He loved his parents, but he also loved the fun and freedom he had when playing with unca Baggy and aunt Lillia.

Snipper saw them from the window and came running out.

“Baggy! Baggy my big, wonderful brother. I’m so happy to see you.” She gave him a big hug. “And to tell you the news.”

Baggy stopped in his tracks. “News? What news?”

“Well, you know Biff and I went to Niagara Swamp to have a second honeymoon, but. . .”

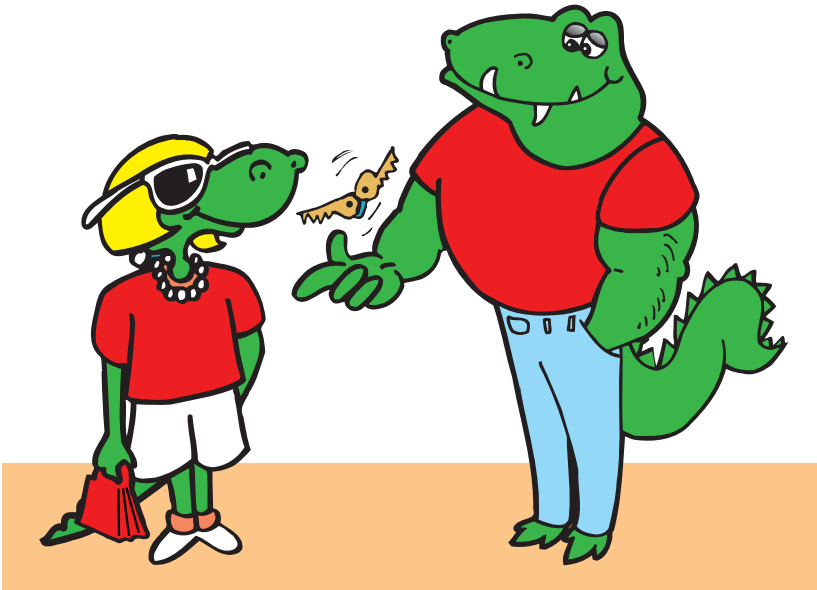
“But?” repeated Baggy, nervously twisting his bowtie.

“What we didn’t foresee was that they would drain the swamp for their own purposes. Niagara Swamp is closed for now. Which means that Biff and I are going to change our destination and go honeymoon somewhere else. Does Hawaii have swamps?”

“Beautiful swamps!” answered Lillia.

“All surrounded by palm trees and pineapples, flamingos and gators,” added Nipper, giving Lillia a sly smile.

Biff lumbered out the door, his muscles bulging. He joined the group, tossing and catching his car keys.



“Hey, Baggy, how’s it goin’?” he roared, slapping Baggy on the back to say hello.

“Oh Biff,” crooned Snipper, “they said Hawaii is a marvelous place for us to do our second honeymoon.”

“Well, that sounds great!” growled Biff. “Hmmm, Hawaii. I like it. Sounds like a great place to go. Let’s be off.”

Snipper patted Little Nipper on the head.

“Now you keep being the darling boy you are, Nipper honey, and keep your uncle Baggy out of trouble. We’ll be back after our honeymoon. Bye Lillia, thanks for all you’re doing to help watch Nipper. Bye all. Bye-bye,” shouted Snipper out the car window as Biff accelerated and drove off.



Baggy stood watching and reluctantly waving good-bye. He then took a deep breath and turned.

“Well, Nipper, my neat, nifty nephew. Lillia, my best buddy. Looks like we’ve got some more time to spend together. So, let’s go,” said Baggy as he began a brisk walk.

“Where are you going?” asked Nipper and Lillia.

“To catch the bakery before they close. The museum cultured me so much that I’m hoping the baker will notice it and give me a few extra doughnut holes for free. Woo woo.”

“Woo woo,” echoed Lillia and Nipper as they ran to catch up.



- The End -